

Saga™

BRIAN K. VAUGHAN FIONA STAPLES

CHAPTER
SIX

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Saga

CHAPTER
SIX

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Once upon a time,
each of us was somebody's kid.

OW.
OW OW
OW.

She's
obsessed
with
my neck
flesh.

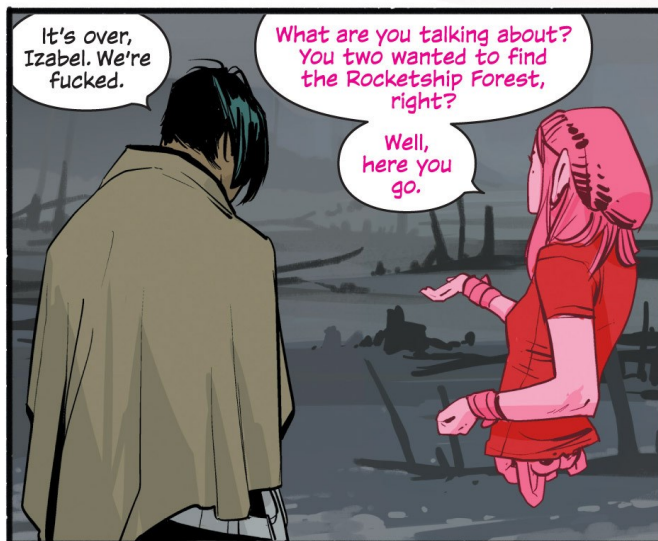
I know,
her fingernails
are like little
hypodermics.





Evening, boss.

What I miss?



It's over, Izabel. We're fucked.

What are you talking about? You two wanted to find the Rocketship Forest, right?

Well, here you go.



This isn't a forest, it's a graveyard.

Depends on how you look at it, really.

Are you on drugs? Whatever used to grow here was all slashed and burned ages ago!



Shit, you lifers believe everything you see.

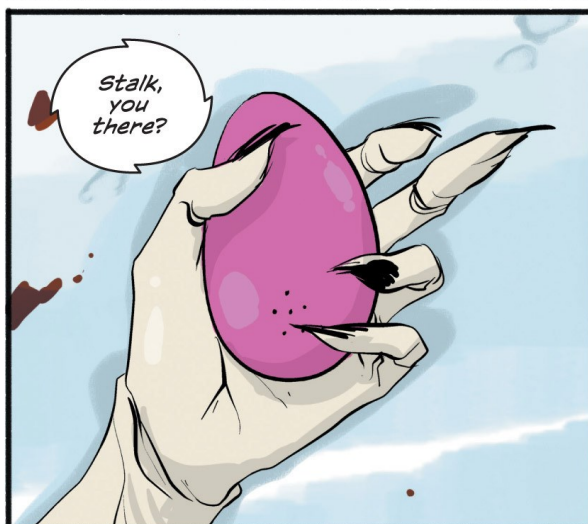
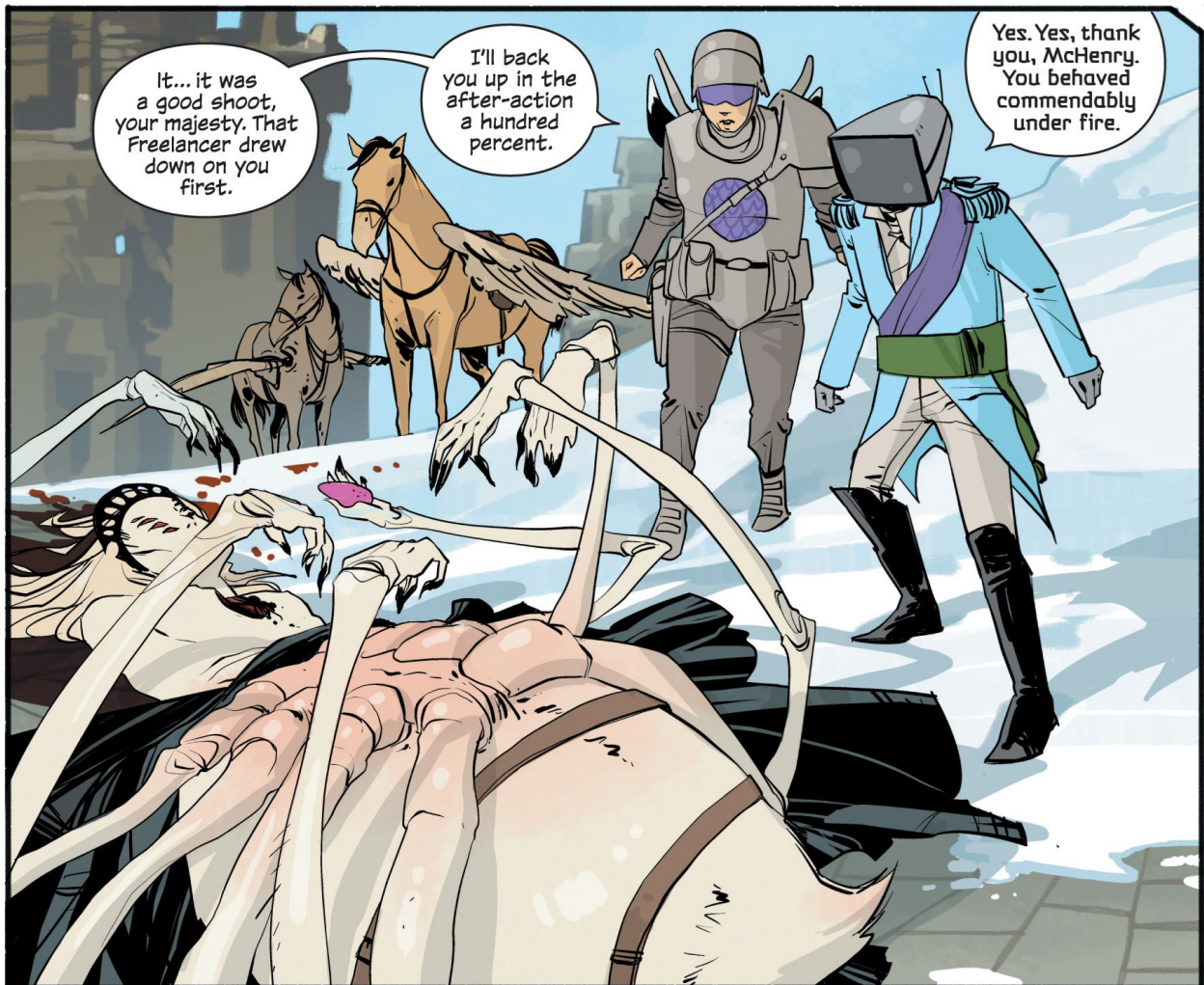
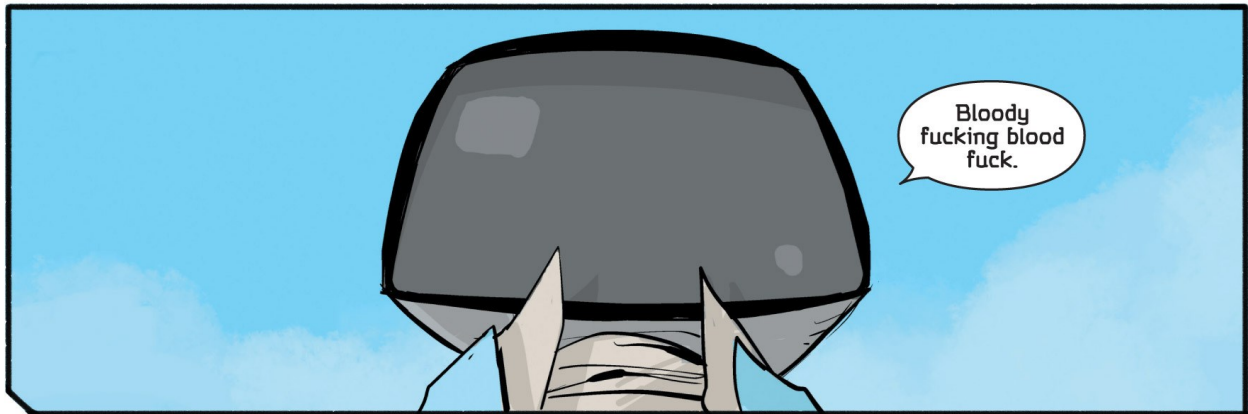
Us floaty types are masters of *misdirection*, remember? You really think we wouldn't hide a few saplings?

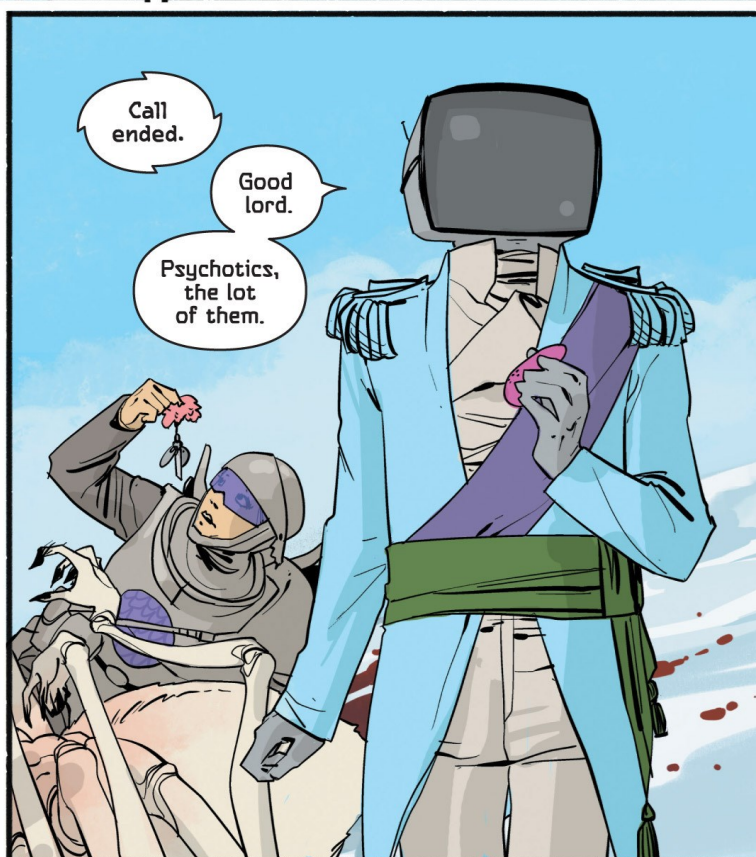
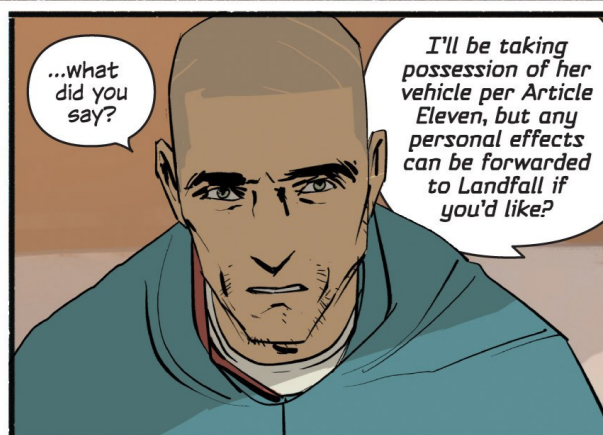
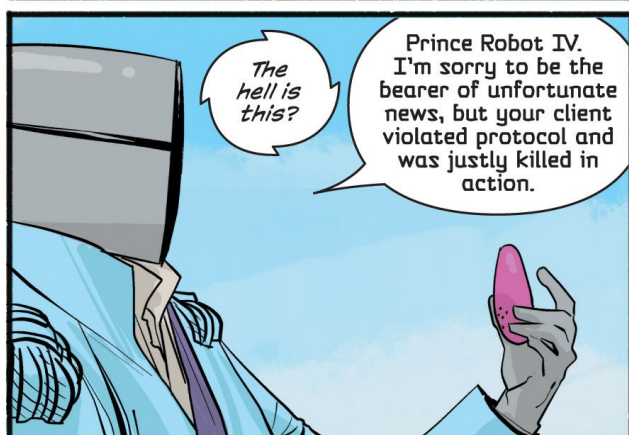
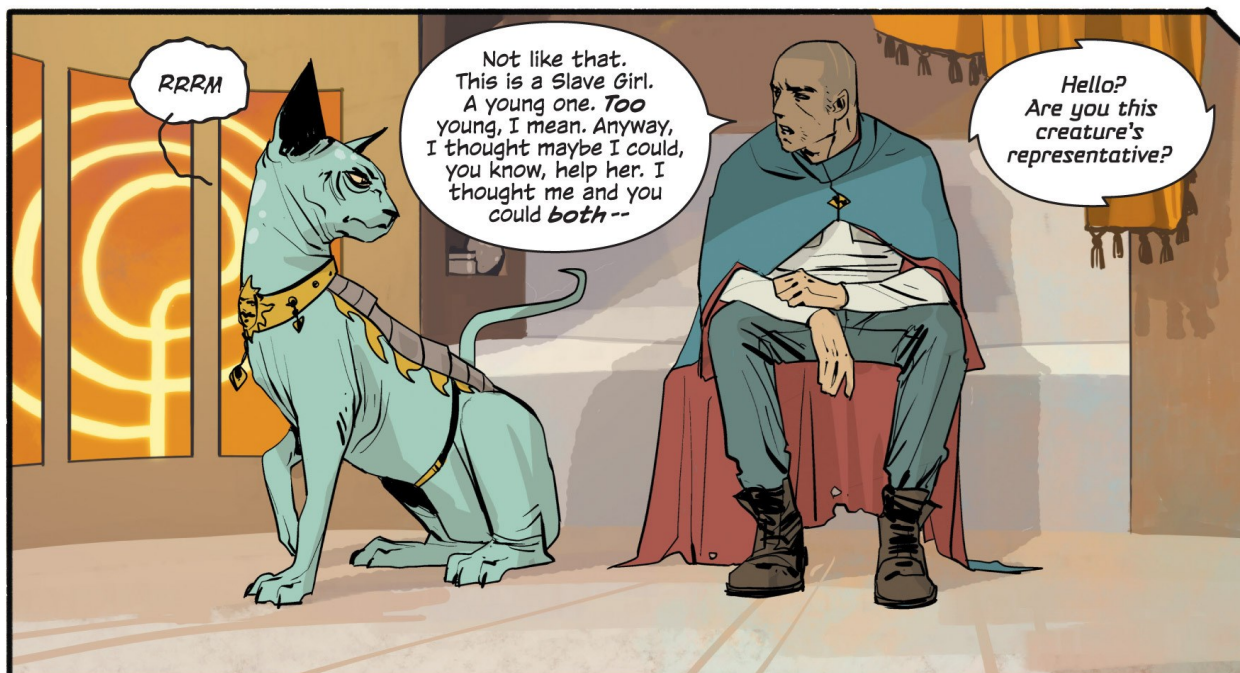


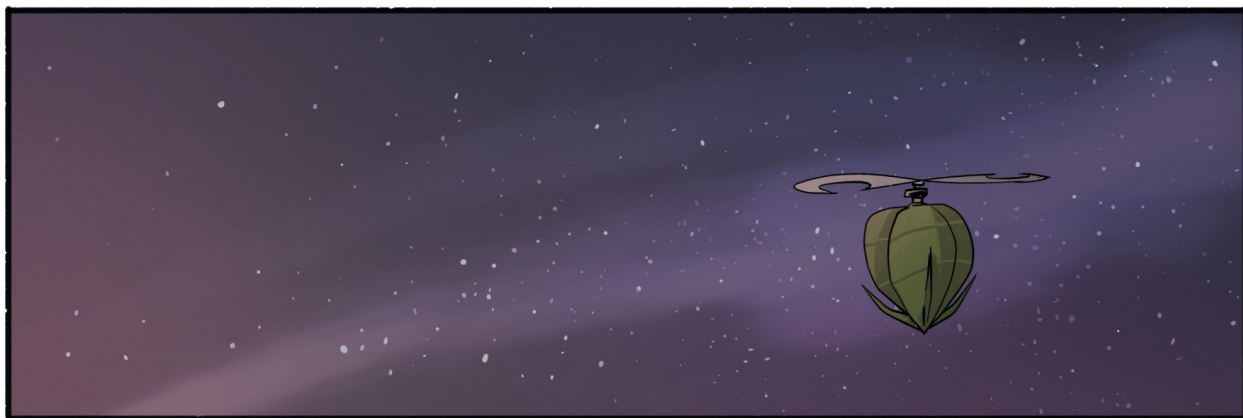
Your girl has no idea how lucky she is.

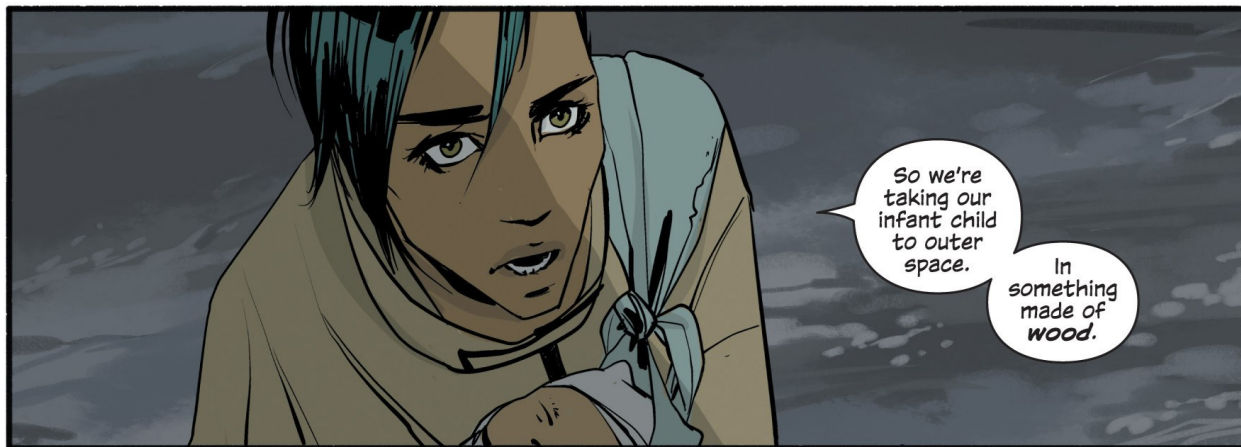


I woulda
killed for a
treehouse
when I was
a kid.









So we're taking our infant child to outer space.

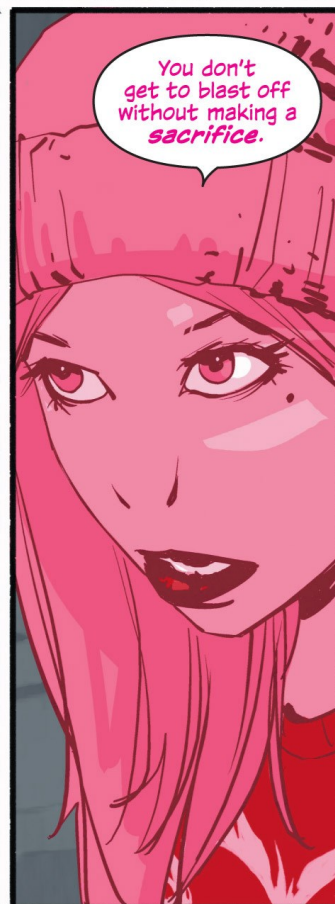
In something made of wood.



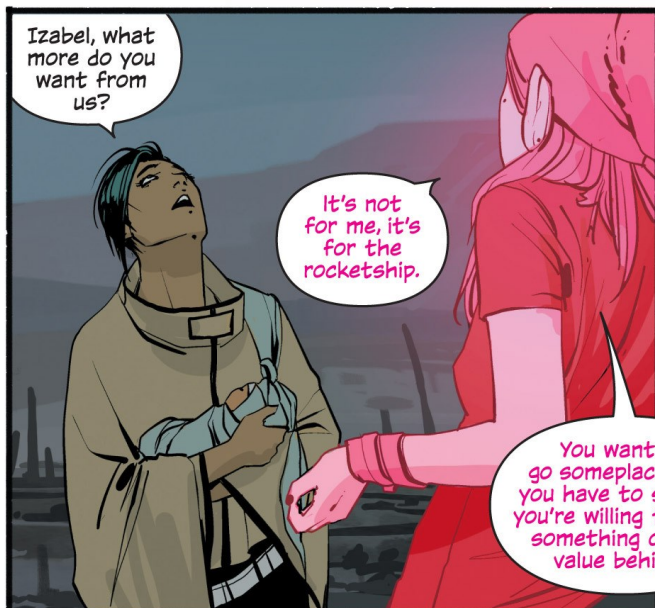
Don't judge, dear. Some of the greatest ships in Wreath's armada use lumber, makes them almost completely invisible to modern instruments.

Come on, let's check out her insides.

Whoa, not so fast, horndog.



You don't get to blast off without making a sacrifice.



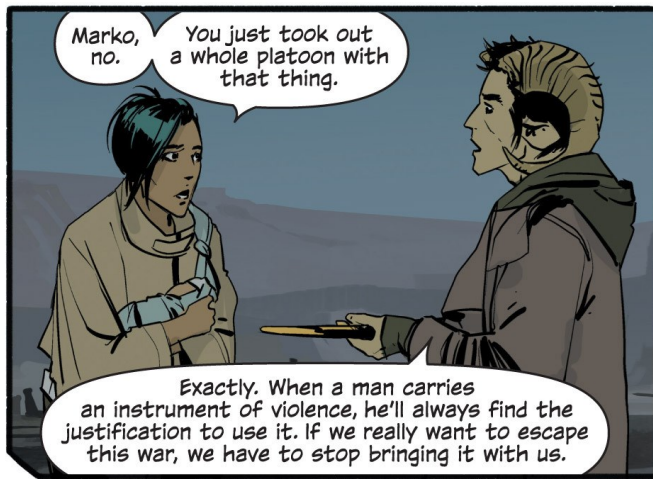
Izabel, what more do you want from us?

It's not for me, it's for the rocketship.

You want to go someplace new, you have to show it you're willing to leave something of real value behind.

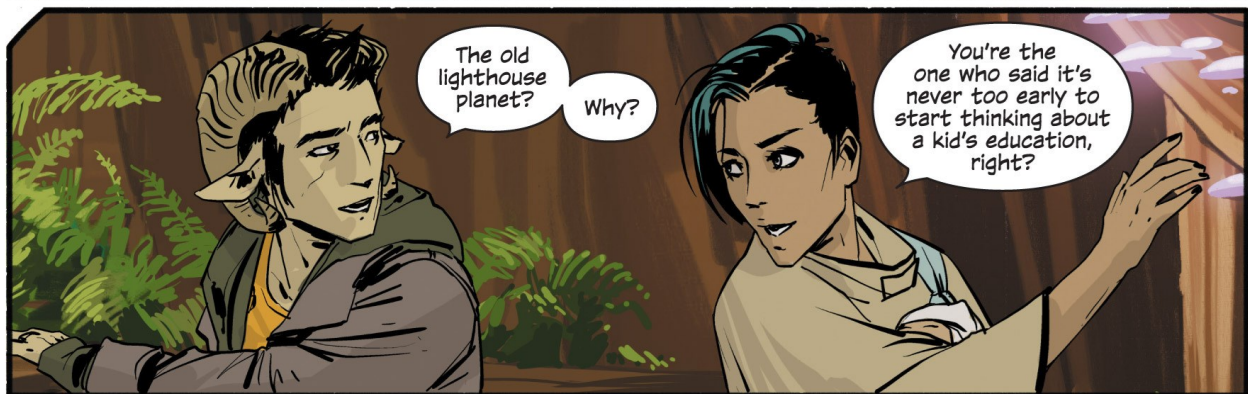


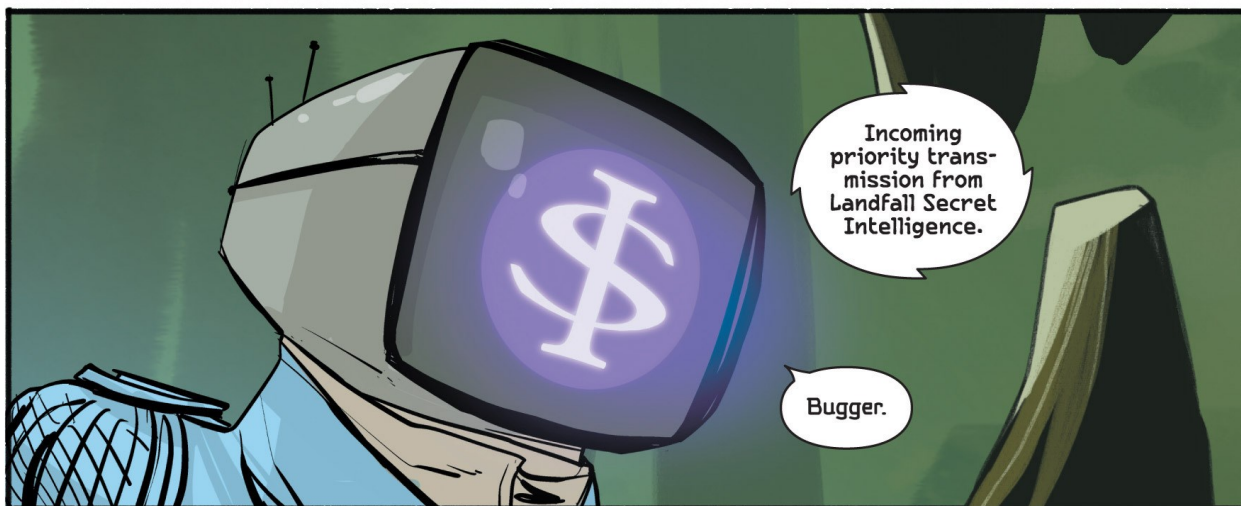
Then I offer up this.

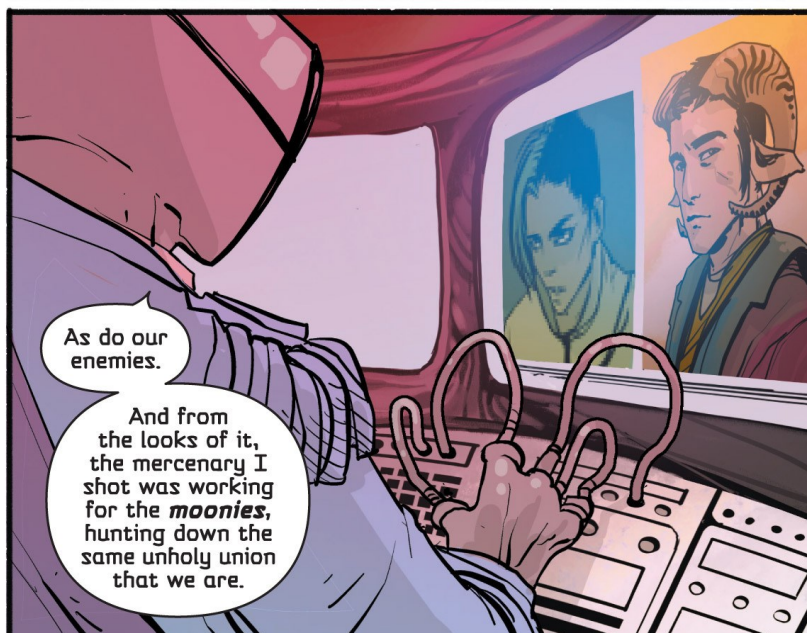
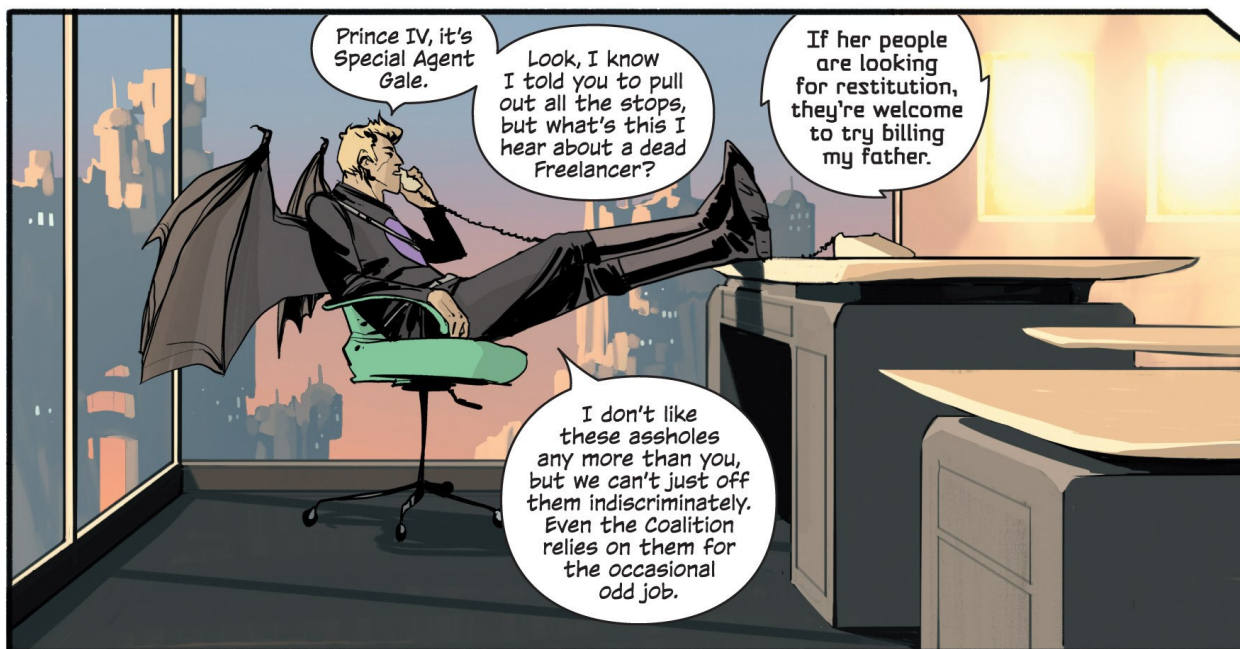














And if this were just a fact-finding expedition, maybe I'd give two shits. But it's not.

So if you want to be home in time for a certain *joyous occasion*, you'd better make goddamn sure your targets never get off Cleave alive, understood?



Threaten all you want, it doesn't change the fact that your lovebirds have likely already flown the coop.

If I was able to secure passage off this world, I have no doubt Alana and her brood did, as well. They could be literally anywhere in the...



Prince?
You still online?

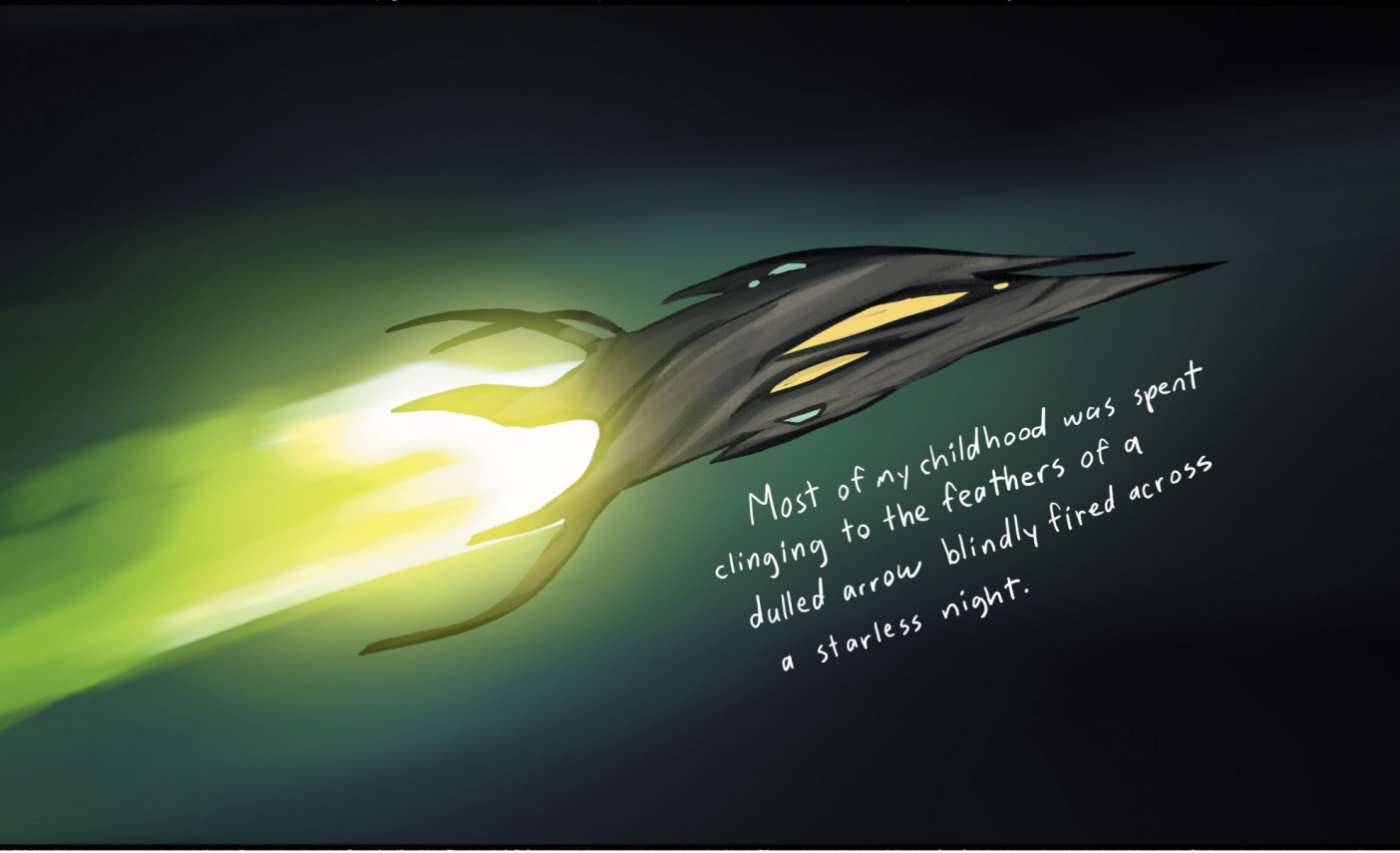
D. OSWALD HEIST is the Louper-nominated author of over forty novels. He resides on Quietus.



Where the hell did you go?



So yeah, this is where I grew up →



Most of my childhood was spent clinging to the feathers of a dulled arrow blindly fired across a starless night.

It was heaven.

Say goodbye, sweet girl.

That little dot is where you came into our lives.

For a while, anyway.





What?!

I thought you said these ships were undetectable!

They are! There's no way anyone could...



No. My sword.



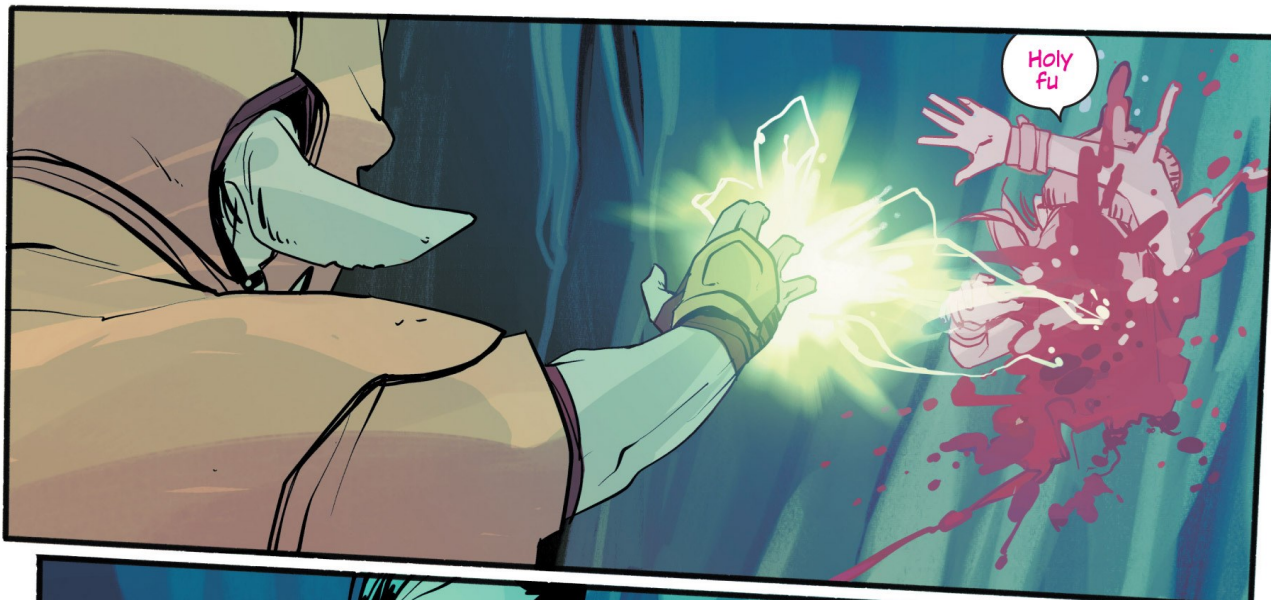
What'd you do this time?!

Breaking the blade must have **summoned** her. She's probably using its hilt to follow us. God, she's going to **kill** me.

Who? Is this that **Gwendolyn** bitch? Marko, if your ex wants her stupid rings back, just--



KIE ESTAS MIA KNABO!





And then my grandparents came to live with us.



TO BE CONTINUED

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Not the end...!

Though it could have been.

If our book hadn't found an audience in its first six months (a distinct possibility for a new series in this treacherous marketplace), I told Fiona that we could have our heroes literally blow up on the launchpad in what would have been an awesomely depressing sixth and final chapter.

But because of loyal readers like you, it was clear from our first sold-out issue that we'd have an excellent shot at telling Hazel's entire epic story, the way it was meant to be told. I definitely have a real ending in mind for *Saga*, but it's still in the distant future, so thanks again to all of you who continue to make the journey possible.

And now that we've survived our first arc together, I'd be remiss not to single out the stunning work of co-creator Fiona Staples (@FionaStaples to you Tweepers), who has handled every single aspect of the art for the past six issues (seven if you count our double-sized debut). I can't think of too many other artists in comics who have been doing twenty-two pages of full-color work (with covers!) every single month... certainly not with the skill and imagination of the One Who Staples.

So to make sure that we don't destroy Fiona (and so that I don't have to hack out fill-in scripts for inevitably lesser artists), our series will now be taking two quick "skip months." I know, I know, cue wailing and gnashing of teeth, but in October, Image will mitigate your suffering by releasing *SAGA: VOLUME ONE*, collecting all 160 pages of our first six chapters for a special, drug-dealer-style low introductory price of just \$9.99.

Also in October, Fiona and I are proud to be guests of the New York Comic Con, our first and only appearance together since the book's release, believe it or not. Check www.newyorkcomiccon.com for more details about when and where to see me nervously blow out another eyeball all over Fiona's sketchpad.

And then, in November, after Fiona and I have built up some lead time and your friends and loved ones have reread the *Saga* collections you purchased for them, we can all jump back on the monthly train together with Chapter Seven, as Alana meets the in-laws, and our story rockets off in some very strange new directions.

Copacetic?

For those who care, these dopey letter columns will never be reprinted anywhere, which is probably one more reason you're now considering "waiting for the trade." That's cool with us, but just know, if you hop off the singles bandwagon now, you'll never get to witness our first ever **Ill-Advised *Saga* Costume Contest!** More details in the next installment of *To Be Continued*, but the prizes promise to be pretty awesome, so start shopping for your raw sausages soon, would-be Izabels.

For now, let's tackle a few of your letters, shall we? As

a friendly reminder, please DON'T send: story ideas, unpublished fiction or comics for us to sign. Please DO send: dating questions, strange take-out menus and colorful folding money.

Brian,

*I am kicking myself for not responding to your survey. As you can see from my address, I hail from Utah. It wasn't something you said. Keep saying what you say, *Saga* is my favorite comic book every month. You and Fiona are awesome!*

Adriene H.

Bountiful, UT

Thanks so much, Adriene! At the end of Chapter Four, I mentioned that we'd only heard from forty-nine states, but the good folks of beautiful Bountiful have helped make that a clean fifty.

I also asked if there were any active military-types reading the book, but I never dreamed we'd receive the following partially redacted postcard:

████ SAGA █████ is █████ the █████ best █████!

In Excelsis Deo,

SSG David C.

US Army

Guantanamo Bay, Cuba

Disclaimer: This is not an intended representation of DoD opinion, but I do share SAGA with all of my friends.

Et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis, Staff Sergeant. And thanks for sharing our subversive literature with others inside Guantanamo Bay.

Phase One is complete.

Dear Brian K. Vaughan & Fiona Staples,

Sorry about my handwriting. Believe it or not, I'm a 23-year-old man. Yes! I have girly handwriting.

*I was just writing to thank you both... *Saga* has this incredible element of "fuck knows what will happen next, it could be anything" to it and I can't get enough. And with Fiona's unique artwork, I know the boundaries are limitless.*

*By the time this gets printed (FINGERS BLOODY CROSSED), I'll be in Indonesia for three months being a model and silly things like that but I'll be buying *Saga* still, even if it's printed entirely in Indonesian...!*

Plenty of thumbs up and love,

Ben S.

Swindon, England

Well played, Ben. If I were a male model, I'd find some way

to casually mention it to every periodical I subscribed to, as well. Enjoy Indonesia!

Dear Brian & Fiona,

Dude, I don't even really like babies, and this book makes me go to that dopeshit place where I'm all "aww babies" that seems to be some strange female Spidey Sense I can't get rid of. Well done on tapping into that quintessentially female cosmic force — and thanks for putting it in a comic!

This book is just plain amazing in so many ways and you two are my comics dream team — can't wait to keep reading!
Jo Ann S.

Duluth, Georgia

Thanks, Jo Ann. And speaking of dopeshit, a few issues back, remember when I rambled about this:

"Like two years ago, I was reading a thread on Bendis' message board about favorite webcomics. Someone linked to a slice-of-life story that featured a young boy groggily waking up from a dream, then fixing cereal and watching television by himself until his hungover (?) father stumbles downstairs to speak with him. I only read the opening scene, and I know it doesn't sound like much from my shitty description, but the artwork and storytelling were PHENOMENAL. Anyway, I planned to finish the story later, but I guess I forgot to bookmark the site, and when I went back through my history, the webcomic and any threads mentioning it had all disappeared, like a digital Brigadoon. So did I hallucinate this webcomic, or does it really exist?"

Well, out of the tens of thousands of you who allegedly read this stupid comic, only ONE of you seemed to have any earthly clue what the fuck I was talking about:

Brian,

Was the webcomic about the boy waking up this one by Connor Willumsen?

<http://www.connorwillumsen.com/everett/>

Guess what, I went to art school with Connor!

Signed,

Fiona

P.S. Haywire WAS so-so. I loved the action scenes, but what was with the anticlimactic info-dump at the very end? I think those important things should have been revealed through the plot! It's not even CHANNING TATUM'S best movie (The Eagle is). But what do I know, I like the Schumacher Batmans, haha.

What the...? FIONA? I've been hunting for this answer for like two years, and the only person who knows the answer is the same artist I've been collaborating with for the last two years?! And she and this guy were classmates?!?! It's like a low-stakes Twilight Zone!

Anyway, Connor Willumsen's story "Everett" is even more breathtaking than I remembered, so you should definitely check it out before it disappears again.

And if Connor is a fan of Haywire, he's welcome to replace Fiona immediately.

Brian & Fiona,

I know that I'm tardy to the party, but I really wanted to write

in and tell you fine folks that I have fallen head over flats for this series. (Robot sex included!)

I haven't been this excited for a series in a long time, and I really can't wait for future issues. For the record, I love that there are "earthly" things in this reality. In fact, I could gush about all the tiny things I love about Saga but suffice it to say that I look something like this when I see new issues in my box:

[adorable doodle of tiny head gushing cartoon hearts]

So thank you for that.

Kristine V.

Downey, CA

And thank you for liking robot sex, Kristine. We didn't get too many complaints about the graphic nudity in Chapter Four, but I thought it was interesting that any concerned readers were universally male...

Dear Brian and Fiona,

While I enjoyed the fourth issue for the most part, there are aspects of it that leave me scratching my head, mainly all the scenes featuring The Will on the planet Sextillion. What was the purpose of all that? Was it to establish his character? I think his character can be established in less gratuitous ways.

While the first issue displayed some "shocking" elements, I let them go since I tend to give each title more than one issue to pass full judgment on whether or not I will keep reading it or not, but four issues in and I'm starting to wonder is there purpose to what you are showing us or are you just trying to be "shocking"? If it's the latter, I'm afraid to say it comes out in poor taste.

To get to the more positive elements of the issue, I really am enjoying the dynamic between Marko and Alana and with the added presence of Izabel, I think it can only get better. Their dialogue sounds exactly like how a married couple interacts with one another and the "babysitter" adds to the scenario effectively. It is the feather-in-the-cap reason why this title is worth picking up each month.

The artwork continues to be great, and this includes coloring and lettering. I like the use of different "fonts" for each character and/or narration. The fact that Hazel narrates the story gives it a sort of flashback feel to it as if she's recapping the events based on what her parents, or others, have told her. It does provide a unique reading experience in terms of: are we reading the past or present? It reminds me very much of the TV show The Wonder Years, except we knew that was a "flashback story" narrated by an older Kevin Arnold.

I will be picking up next issue to see Marko fight for the safety and well being of his family. For me, that is the only reason to fight. I have a feeling it will develop between these characters, and the dynamic between them, exponentially. I can't wait!

Sincerely,

Nick Zaromatidis

Sincere apologies for those shocking scenes, Nick. In my script, I clearly stated that The Will was walking past "chaste statues, modest paintings and other wholesome images." Unfortunately, it turns out that my collaborator is some sort of maladjusted Canadian deviant, and by the time I saw her lewd interpretations of our story, it was too late to destroy the print run.

At least, that's what I'm telling my poor parents, who still dutifully buy my filthy comics at Carol & John's every month.

Happy 40th wedding anniversary, Mom and Dad!

Dear Brian,

Yes, *Saga* is a fine book with extraordinary art by Ms. Staples, and I did appreciate your endearing attempt to get me to waive your overdue fees ("...librarians, who are without exception the best people on the planet"), but could we talk more about Jon Klassen's *I Want My Hat Back*? Do you do voices for all of the animals? Do you act out the bear's revelation? Did that scrubby bush also mislead you into thinking the bear sat on the thief? Do you show the book to all your artist friends and exclaim, "Look at how adorable it is"?

I don't think my coworkers have been subjected to so many impromptu picture book performances since the eternal glory that is Mo Willem's *Don't Let The Pigeon Drive The Bus* arrived on my desk years ago. Happy reading! And may your children always want to hear Dad read a story "for the trillionth time."

Jennifer M.

Play Dell Rey, CA

You have excellent taste, Jennifer. Mo Willems is a god, and *Knuffle Bunny Free: An Unexpected Diversion* is as emotionally devastating as his *Don't Let The Pigeon Drive The Bus* is primally hilarious.

But I've actually been making time for some (slightly) more mature picture books these days:

Los Angeles Ink Stains — From our friends at Image Comics, Jim Mahfood's new autobio/graphic novel is one of the best books ever about what it's like to be a working artist in Los Angeles. A+ cartooning.

The Lovely Horrible Stuff — Artist Eddie Campbell made a bit of money after *From Hell*, and then he made a comic about it. Money, that is. Hilarious and provocative, like all of Campbell's work. Lovely stuff from Top Shelf.

David Mazzuchelli's *'Daredevil: Born Again' Artist's Edition* — Another must-have masterpiece from IDW. I don't even need to plug this, I just want to brag that I own one.

The Walking Dead — Issue #100 is about to hit stands as I write this, so I just wanted to take a second to congratulate Robert Kirkman and Charlie Adlard (not to mention original artist Tony Moore) on that unbelievably cool accomplishment. I jealously despise how good their book still is, but *Saga* probably wouldn't exist if weren't for the bloody path those guys helped to forge for smart, accessible, creator-owned comics for adults, so thanks for the great stories, gents.

See you at #200.

Hello Brian,

Did you know that 'Saga' is the name of an organization in the UK that organizes and runs holidays for the over-50s?

Best,

Amit

London, England

Ruh-oh. This could be a problem, like the time Oprah told all

her viewers to go out and see the movie *CRASH* and my mom accidentally rented the Cronenberg film of the same name...

Hi BKV and team,

I've never been interested in reading comic books but I teach art to kids and I've noticed they love comic books. This Saturday I decided to go to Forbidden Planet to check out the comic books and get some ideas for a comic book lesson for my kids. My friend was with me and he told me to check out *Saga* because he liked BKV's previous work. The cover art immediately got my attention and the art on the inside equally impressed me. I bought the book and read it last night and I totally love it! The characters are likable and interesting. The location is unique and I wonder what sort of adventures will take place in it. Thank you for creating this and I look forward to reading the next issues.

Enjoy the summer in California!

Best,

Tiffany Navarro

Brooklyn, NY

P.S. I teach homeless teenagers. Do you know of any comic books they could relate to?

If this "teaching homeless teenagers" angle is just a cheap ploy for free comics, it's one that my dachshund Hamburger K. Vaughan admires. That means that you and your students will be getting several volumes of *Runaways* (the all-ages series I did with Adrian Alphona, Christina Strain, and many more fine folks at Marvel), as well as some other wondrous clutter from the Almighty Prize Drawer: a monogrammed napkin pilfered from the restroom of Walt Disney's impenetrable Club 33, a voucher worth \$00.23 from Cleveland's mildly dispiriting Horseshoe Casino, and a rare second printing of *Saga* #4.

Speaking of which, I wanted to thank our own Fonografiks, who did an incredible job designing all of the second, third, fourth and even fifth printings we were fortunate to have with these first few issues of *Saga*. The team decided against doing alternate covers for each of our new printings, since those tend to end up with speculators instead of curious new readers (he said, self-congratulatory as ever). But to subtly distinguish reprints, Steven did multiple all-new versions of our logo and trade dress, each more elegant than the last. Collect them all, fellow font fetishists!

All right, I think that's about enough backslapping for this month. If I haven't made it embarrassingly clear already, I love being back in comics, and I particularly love getting to work on *Saga*, so thanks so much again to everyone who helped our family achieve liftoff.

The best is still ahead of us.

More soon,

Brian